

Bethany College (Old Main)  
Route 67, 5 miles east of  
junction with Route 88  
Bethany  
Brooke County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-118

HABS  
WVA  
5-BETH  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BETHANY COLLEGE ("Old Main")

HABS  
WVA,  
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HABS No. WV-118

Location:

The structure is located on the campus of Bethany College, in Brooke County, West Virginia, about 16 miles north of Wheeling, 8 miles southeast of Wellsburg, and 2.2 miles west of the Pennsylvania state line. Its south end sits about 350 feet north of West Virginia Route 67, about 0.5 mile east of the intersection of West Virginia Routes 67 and 88.

USGS Bethany 7.5 minute Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates: 17.537420.4450420 (south end)  
17.537470.4450530 (north end)

Present Owner:

Trustees of Bethany College

Present Occupant:

Bethany College

Present Use:

College classrooms, laboratories, offices and convocation hall.

Significance:

"Old Main" at Bethany College is an outstanding example of a single building designed to accommodate the entire range of college functions and to stand as an imposing piece of architecture on its hilltop site — when seen from the road below or from one of the other hills around this small West Virginia town. "Old Main" is noteworthy among the few surviving American college buildings from the decades before the Civil War as one of the largest and the most accomplished of those employing a Gothic style. Its construction is predominantly of plain red brick, with only a limited amount of explicitly Gothic detailing in the stonework of the doorways, windows, finials, and capstones. The design for "Old Main" shows the adaptation of the Gothic style from a type of construction relying on elaborately carved and fitted stone masonry to one relying on the massing of building blocks with relatively austere surfaces of brick — the material most readily available to this Ohio Valley college, confidently rebuilding in 1858. For similar successful adaptations of Gothic design to brick construction, one must otherwise look to the pre-Civil War churches of the mid-Atlantic states and the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: The structure was built, from north to south, between 1858 and 1871. Oglebay Hall was built at the north end of "Old Main" in 1911-12, to replace the original Society Hall, which had burned in 1879.
2. Architects:
  - a. Walter and Wilson, of Cincinnati, were the architects of the original 1858-71 building. This partnership, which lasted from about 1851 to 1863, consisted of William Walter (c.1815-1886) and James Keys Wilson (1828-1894). William Walter was the son of Henry Walter, designer of the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains in Cincinnati. James K. Wilson studied drawing in Philadelphia and architecture in New York in the offices of Martin Thompson, designer of the Second Bank of the United States in New York, and James Renwick, designer of Grace Church in New York and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Wilson worked with Renwick "till 1847," then traveled in Europe for about a year, before returning to Cincinnati in the spring of 1848. Bethany College was the single major building designed by Walter and Wilson during their twelve-year partnership and was probably largely the work of Wilson. In 1858 Wilson is said to have visited Europe, but it is not known whether this trip occurred before or after the Bethany design was submitted to the Board of Trustees and approved in August 1858. After leaving William Walter, Wilson designed the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati (1864-66), the Schoenberger House ("Scarlet Oaks") in Cincinnati (1867), and the Dexter Mausoleum in Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery (1869). Wilson was an organizer of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1869, and its first president.
  - b. Edward Bates Franzheim (1866-ca.1942) was the architect of Oglebay Hall, built in 1911. He was born in Wheeling and studied architecture in Boston, where he was employed as a draftsman in the office of John Hubbard Sturgis, from 1886 to 1892. Franzheim also traveled in Europe during these years, before returning to Wheeling to establish his practice about 1892. In the late 1890s he was in partnership with M.F. Giesey and F.F. Faris, and from about 1905 to 1909, in partnership with Archibald L. Klieves. From then on he maintained an independent practice designing many buildings in Wheeling and vicinity.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The structure is located on the campus of Bethany College, on land owned by the Trustees of Bethany College.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers (Names given are for individuals and firms associated with work on the original 1858-71 building. Dates given with each name indicate when work can be documented. Actual work may extend over a long period.):
  - a. Superintendent of construction: John Taylor, of Cincinnati (c.1858-71)
  - b. Builder: Alexander Coen, of Wheeling (c.1860-61)
  - c. Brick: J.W. Boring (c.1858); Henry Glass (c.1869); W.J. Mills of Bellaire, Ohio (c.1870); bids also received from Mr. Merryman, of Wellsburg, West Virginia (1869) and B.F. Jacobs (1869).
  - d. Lumber: William McFarland (c.1869); Mr. McKenney, of Steubenville, Ohio (c.1869)
  - e. Stone cutters: Ebenezer Wright, of Wheeling (c.1867); John Ainsley, of Steubenville (c.1870-71)
  - f. Roofing slate: Twin City Slate Mining and Manufacturing Co., of Pittsburgh (c.1870-71); bid also received from Aiken and Co., of Pittsburgh (1870)
  - g. Stained glass (for Commencement Hall): William Nelson, of Pittsburgh Stained and Cut Glass Works (c.1870-71)
5. Original plan and construction: The building consists of seven sections arranged along a single axis. The two end sections have their axes perpendicular to the long axis of the building. The central section is roughly square in plan at ground level. Between the central section and the two end sections are connecting sections, consisting of a two-story unit adjacent to the central section and a one-story section adjacent to either end section. A continuous open arcaded corridor runs along the rear of these connecting sections at the first-floor level, passing beneath the tower, which rises at the rear of the central section.

While each of the seven sections has a distinctive massing and main (front) elevation, they are coordinated and balanced into a picturesque but disciplined structure that stretches for 420 feet across the principal hill on the Bethany campus.

Construction began in May 1858 on the northern end of the building, with the section designated as Society Hall. This section (burned in 1879 and replaced in 1911 by Oglebay Hall) was originally a two-story structure, T-shaped in plan (with the arms of the T in line with the long axis of the rest of the building). Its symmetrical front elevation consisted of three principal bays, the foreset central bay rising to a cross gable with finial, and the two side bays rising to wall dormers. Extending to the rear of Society Hall was

a two-story block with wall dormers on the north and south sides. The entire north section of "Old Main" measured approximately 60' by 80'. It was known as Society Hall, because it contained rooms for the Adelpian Society (ground floor) and the Neotrophian Literary Society and the American Literary Institute (second floor). A fourth large room, on the ground floor, was used as the college chapel until about 1860. There were two libraries on each floor adjoining the society rooms. Society Hall was substantially completed by the opening of the fall term in 1858.

Construction proceeded southward into the north connecting units and the central section with its tower. By March 1859, the College would report, "we have also under contract and in the process of erection, an additional section, embracing the main centre or Tower Building and all the intermediate connections, between it and the part now finished [Society Hall]." [Millennial Harbinger, 5th Ser., vol. 2, no. 3 (March 1859), 162.] A frontage just short of 250' would be completed by the opening of the fall term in 1859, including Society Hall (approx. 60'), the two north connecting units (approx. 120'), and the central tower section (approx. 61').

The northernmost unit of the north connecting section (approx. 53') is a one-story structure with two principal bays and contains classrooms. The remaining 67' connecting unit adjoining the central tower section is a two-story structure, also containing classrooms. The second-floor room (approx. 25' by 41') adjacent to the central section was used as a picture gallery from about 1870.

In corresponding position in the south connecting unit, the second-floor room (also 25' by 41'), was used as a museum for the natural history, mineralogy and geology, and ethnological collections from about 1860 to 1911.

Between these two exhibition rooms in the north and south connecting sections was a second-floor room (approx. 58' by 41') behind the oriel window over the central front entrance. This room may have been intended for use as a library, but from 1860 to 1924, it was used as the chapel. On the walls were portraits of some of the figures associated with the founding of Bethany College and five paintings of scenes from the Holy Land by Edward Troye (1808-1874).

Centered at the rear of the central section is the tower (22' square in plan), which contains the principal stairway.

The cornerstone of the southernmost unit, Commencement Hall, was laid in 1860, but little work was actually done at this end of the building. By July 1861, the exterior work on the south connecting units was nearly completed. However, financial uncertainties at the start of the Civil War led the Trustees to vote in December 1861 to suspend all construction.

In 1865 a subscription campaign was launched to raise funds for the completion of the southernmost hall (variously known as Commencement Hall, Alumni Hall, Chapel Hall, the Great Hall, or the Public Hall). While some work may have been done as early as 1867, construction actively resumed in the spring of 1869 and was completed in 1871. The keystone in the arch leading to the corridor which passes through the central tower section records the duration of the first phase of construction of "Old Main": "This building was begun 1858/ finished 1871/ John Taylor/ Supt."

6. Alterations and additions:

- a. Society Hall, at the north end of the building, burned on October 23, 1879, and for almost four decades the ruins or cleared foundations remained visible. In 1911, Earl W. Oglebay, a Wheeling entrepreneur interested in scientific agriculture, provided the funds for the creation of a Department of Agriculture at Bethany and for the replacement of Society Hall with the "Oglebay Hall of Agriculture." The cornerstone was laid on July 7, 1911, and the building was dedicated on November 14, 1912, with facilities for the agriculture, chemistry, physics, biology, and domestic science departments, and for the museum collections. It measures approximately 65' by 130' and consists of a T-shaped plan with a secondary cross gable toward the rear, on the stem of the T. The description of Oglebay Hall in the 1912 Bethany College yearbook states that the new addition "is of the Tudor Gothic architecture in harmony with the main college building." The architect was Edward Bates Franzheim of Wheeling.
- b. Commencement Hall, at the south end of the building, was converted into a gymnasium in 1890, and was remodelled again around 1900 for use as a three-story, forty-bed dormitory. It was restored for use as a chapel, convocation hall, and theater in 1924. The front vestibule or porch was probably added at this time.
- c. In 1911, the wall between the old chapel (second floor, central section) and the old picture gallery (second floor, north connecting unit) was removed to allow for the enlargement of the room that would continue to serve as the chapel until the restoration of Commencement Hall in 1924. This partition was later replaced. After Commencement Hall was converted to the main college chapel, the old chapel room was used as a conservatory of music (late 1930s) and as a hall for ministerial training (1940s).
- d. The pine flooring in the classrooms and in the second-floor chapel and exhibition rooms was replaced with hardwood flooring in 1910. In the same year, the wallpaper was removed throughout "Old Main," and the wall surfaces were replastered.

- e. Much of the brickwork in the gables and in the tower was repointed with a red mortar in 1925.
- f. In 1937 the basement was remodeled. The long rear corridor floor was rebuilt and covered with quarry tile. The basement-level arches, beneath the corridor at the south end of the building, were filled in with glass brick. Thayer Co., of Newcastle, Pennsylvania, were the architects.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

- 1. Founders of the Disciples of Christ and Bethany College: Bethany College was founded in 1840 by Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), who, along with his father, Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), was also a founder of the Disciples of Christ religious denomination. During 1808-09, Alexander Campbell studied at the University of Glasgow, where his father had graduated in the 1780s. Thomas Campbell had gone to America in 1807 and settled in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and Alexander joined him there in 1809. The Christian Association of Washington (Pennsylvania) was founded that year as an ecumenical, non-sectarian group of Protestant congregations. In the early years of the Campbellite movement, attempts were made to maintain affiliations with Presbyterians and Baptists, but by the mid-1820s, the Disciples of Christ had become a separate denomination in spite of themselves. The Disciples were drawn into an alliance and later merger with the Christian Connection (known as Christians), a group with similar origins, deriving from Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist sources.

In 1811 Alexander Campbell settled along Buffalo Creek in what would become Bethany, Virginia (i.e., West Virginia, after the mountain and Ohio Valley counties of Virginia became a separate state in 1863). He became a prolific writer and publisher, and the United States government established a post office in Bethany in 1827, with Campbell as postmaster, in order to handle the volume of correspondence resulting from his publishing activities. Between 1823 and 1830, Campbell edited and printed the Christian Baptist, and beginning in 1830, the Millennial Harbinger, which would continue publication until 1870.

Campbell's comprehensive plan for education outlined the role of four institutions: the family, the primary school, the college, and the church. His earliest efforts were made in connection with the Buffalo Seminary, between 1818 and 1823. The Seminary was actually a fellowship of students who boarded in Bethany and met for lessons at Campbell's house. The primary school of Campbell's fully-elaborated educational plan was a boarding school for children 8 to 15 years of age. It was opened in Bethany in 1843 and remained in operation until 1860. The college itself was chartered by the Virginia legislature on February 20, 1840, and Campbell would serve as president of Bethany College until his death in 1866.

William Kimbrough Pendleton (1817-1899) was graduated from the University of Virginia in 1840 and in the next year was baptized into the Disciples of Christ by Alexander Campbell and married to Campbell's daughter, Lavinia. (After her death, Pendleton would marry her sister, Clarinda, in 1848; and after her death, he would marry Catherine Huntington King, in 1855.) In 1842 Pendleton became the first professor of natural philosophy at Bethany College. He served as vice president of the College from 1845 until Campbell's death in 1866, and as president from 1866 to 1886. Pendleton worked as Campbell's associate editor on the Millennial Harbinger from 1846 to 1865 and as editor from 1865 until publication ceased in 1870. He was also involved in the editorial management of the Christian Quarterly, from 1869 to 1876, and the Christian Standard, beginning in 1873. From 1873 until 1880, Pendleton served as state superintendent of the West Virginia public schools. During 1858, when the decisions were being made concerning the new college building, Pendleton played an active role, along with Alexander Campbell, in raising funds and helping to shape the design.

2. "Old Main" and its design: By the summer of 1842, the original college building at Bethany was completed, located on the hilltop near where the central section of "Old Main" stands today. This three-story brick structure on a high basement was rectangular in plan, measuring 83' by 45', and was nine bays wide. It had a low hip roof, four end chimneys, a one-story Greek Revival porch and a square Greek Revival cupola. It was designed by Louis Hobbs, who was also the architect of the Alexander Campbell study (WV-119). This building was destroyed by fire on December 10, 1857, and only some of the bricks were salvaged.

On December 14, 1857, a building committee was appointed "to procure a plan for new College buildings," and another committee was appointed to stockpile 500,000 bricks in preparation for construction. Within several weeks, Alexander Campbell and William K. Pendleton were on the road, visiting Disciples churches to raise funds, and obtaining ideas for a new building. Between December 22 and 24, they were in Washington, D.C., accompanied by David Staats Burnet (1808-1867), a prominent Cincinnati member of the Disciples. Together they toured the unfinished Capitol, then being extended under the supervision of Thomas U. Walter; the octagonal Botanic Garden, of Gothic design, also by Walter and also under construction (demolished 1932); and the Smithsonian Institution, the red sandstone "Norman" Romanesque building designed by James Renwick in 1846 and completed c.1855-57. [Millennial Harbinger, 5th Ser., vol. 1, no. 3 (March 1858), 159]



By January 6, 1858, Campbell and his delegation had been in Baltimore and Philadelphia and were nearing the end of their stay in New York. He later reported:

"We were anxious while in New York, to examine such of the edifices as might suggest any thing useful towards the model of a new College Building for Bethany."  
[Millennial Harbinger, 5th Ser., vol. 1, no. 5 (May 1858), 248-49]

While the details of the New York tour are not given, it is likely that Campbell and Pendleton inspected the Gothic New York University building in Washington Square, designed by Town and Davis (1832-37; demolished 1894); and the Gothic Free Academy (later the College of the City of New York), designed by James Renwick (1847-49, demolished 1927).

By January 9, 1858, the Bethany Delegation was in Cincinnati, and between February and April, they would travel on through Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, stopping among other places in Louisville, Nashville and Richmond. It was in Cincinnati that they would find their architects for the new building.

Throughout the middle of the nineteenth century, Cincinnati was the preeminent cultural center of the Ohio Valley, and it had long been the major metropolitan focal point of Disciples of Christ activities. Alexander Campbell had participated in several widely publicized debates in Cincinnati: in 1829 with Robert Owen (1771-1858), and in 1837 with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cincinnati, John B. Purcell (1800-1883). The first national convention of the Disciples of Christ had been held in Cincinnati in 1849, and much Disciples literature was published there. The Bethany elders would have found a selection of architects still fairly limited, compared to the selection in the eastern cities they had just visited. Cincinnati had only four architectural firms listed in the city directory for 1858: Edwin A. Anderson and Samuel H. Hannaford; J.R. Hamilton and James W. McLaughlin; Isaiah Rogers and Son, Solomon Willard Rogers; and William Walter and James Keys Wilson. Walter, the senior partner, had been trained in the period when Neo-Classical styles were still favored; Wilson, the junior partner, had been trained in the period when Gothic styles were becoming established as an alternative.

At the Bethany College cornerstone ceremony on May 31, 1858, Alexander Campbell reaffirmed the intent of the College "to project everything upon the most improved models of architectural taste and convenience. He went on to explain, "The Gothic has been adopted as the style most fitly expressive of the aspiring nature of the Christian's aims and hopes, and every care is being taken to adapt the plans and proportions to the present wants and growing prospects of Bethany College."  
[Millennial Harbinger, 5th Ser., vol. 1, no. 7 (July 1858), 416-17]

An article in the Cincinnati Gazette observed, on the basis of drawings shown to the reporter by the architects:

"The style of architecture is the Collegiate Gothic, and the irregular outline, with the tower and the finials give a very pleasing effect." [reprinted in Millennial Harbinger, 5th Ser., vol 2, no. 3 (March 1859), 161-62]

The Board of Trustees voted to "approve the general outline of a plan" submitted for their August 14, 1858, meeting, "for the extension of the College buildings," meaning that the design of the entire structure, from Society Hall on the north to Commencement Hall on the south, was essentially set. At the same meeting they authorized the printing of a lithographic view of the building. This view, probably the one by Middleton, Strobridge & Co. of Cincinnati, showing the building from the northeast, has a tower with crenelated parapet and no steep hip roof or cresting and also only a shallow projection of the central bay of Society Hall (which was certainly well advanced in construction in August 1858). These variations suggest that this view from the northeast represents a stage in the design of the building before some of the final details were decided on or checked by comparison with the building under construction. Two other undated lithographic views, by Strobridge & Co. of Cincinnati, showing the building from the southeast, represent it substantially as built, except that the tower was completed with a steep pyramidal roof with straight sides, rather than the flared sides seen in these two lithographs.

3. "Old Main" and its sources:

- a. The Smithsonian Institution: It is likely that, while in Cincinnati in January 1858, Campbell and his associates discussed with Walter and Wilson the buildings his group had admired on their recent tour of Eastern cities. The architects may have had access to Hints on Public Architecture (1849) by Robert Dale Owen (1801-1877), Chairman of the Building Committee for the Smithsonian Institution. This publication contained the plan for the Smithsonian—a long building consisting of a series of seven distinct functional units symmetrically arranged along a single axis, as the arrangement would be at Bethany. Furthermore, the two buildings are almost exactly the same length: around 420'. Hints on Public Architecture also contained a plate showing Renwick's alternative Gothic design for the Smithsonian. James Keys Wilson probably had first-hand knowledge of Renwick's work on these designs, prepared in the fall of 1846, for he had been a student in Renwick's office from about 1845 until early 1847.

- b. University of Glasgow: An early twentieth-century account by E. T. Williams is the only source for the legend that the design for Bethany College — particularly the tower — was influenced by Alexander Campbell's recollection of buildings at his alma mater, the University of Glasgow:

"The College building, built on a slope of Mount Lavinium [as the main hill on the Bethany campus was known in the nineteenth century], was very imposing, a brick building of collegiate Gothic in architecture, a replica in part of the main building of Glasgow University, where Alexander Campbell and his father had been students. In 1878 I visited Glasgow and noted the resemblance, but the square Tower of Glasgow had been modified at Bethany by covering it with a Mansard roof."

We cannot be sure which university building Williams was looking at in 1878. The university had just moved in 1870 to its new site in the Gilmorehill district, into a massive Gothic building designed by George Gilbert Scott in 1865-67. Its central tower remained incomplete, probably appearing "square" at the top, until the spire and four corner pinnacles were finally added in 1888.

The university buildings Alexander Campbell would have remembered were in High Street. This site had been turned over to the City of Glasgow Union Railway Company, and by 1887, all of the old buildings would be demolished. Campbell probably recalled the layout of the buildings — a square "Inner Quadrangle" adjoining a smaller trapezoidal "Outer Quadrangle" which fronted on High Street. These were three and four-story stone buildings, constructed during a long building campaign in the middle of the seventeenth century. Above the building which separated the two quadrangles rose a 140' tower, square in plan, with a large clock near the top and a steeply flared (i.e. concave) pyramidal roof capped by a small convex pyramidal roof. This tower was built in 1656-58 in a Scottish provincial version of a Renaissance style, most visible in the balustraded parapet and the two-part, round-arched window below the clock stage. At the base of the tower was an off-center passageway between the two quadrangles. Campbell may have remembered the tower for its overall proportions and its image as a landmark identifying the university. Yet the double quadrangle plan at Glasgow and the hybrid Renaissance features of the tower itself would have suggested little that would be of specific use for Bethany.

The name of Mount Lavinium for the hill at Bethany has, by indirection, a symbolic link with the Glasgow legend. The hill was known by this name at least as early as 1841, when Alexander Campbell's daughter, Lavinia (born 1818, the year the Buffalo Seminary opened) and son-in-law, William K. Pendleton, moved into the Gothic cottage north of "Old Main" now known as "Pendleton Heights." Campbell had named his daughter (and perhaps the hill), thinking of Virgil's account in the Aeneid of the founding of Lavinium, which Aeneas named after his wife, Lavinia. Just as Aeneas and his father Anchises had come from Troy to Italy, where they founded Lavinium on a hill south of Rome, so had Alexander and Thomas Campbell left the religious controversies of Protestant Ireland and Scotland to come to western Pennsylvania and Virginia, where Alexander was married and where father and son began their civilizing work as churchmen in the wilderness.

- c. Ascension Hall, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio: Ascension Hall, begun a year before Bethany College, has, in some respects, more similarities to the Bethany building than does the Smithsonian Institution. It is a crenelated Gothic college building of three principal stories, consisting of seven distinct sections massed symmetrically along a single axis. The central crenelated tower contains large rooms for literary societies on both the second and third floors. But it differs significantly from "Old Main" in being tightly compacted along its major axis. While "Old Main" is a broadly extended building of 420', with considerable picturesque variety in its component parts, Ascension Hall is a perfectly symmetrical composition of relatively narrow units, with an overall length of 171'.

Ascension Hall was designed in the spring of 1857 by William Tinsley, an Irish-trained architect then practicing in Indianapolis. Tinsley did maintain ties with Cincinnati and in April 1858 entered into a brief cooperative partnership with Anderson and Hannaford of that city. In January 1859 Tinsley moved to Cincinnati, but he continued in practice by himself. Ascension Hall was begun in June 1857, a little less than a year before Bethany College, but only the central and north sections of the Kenyon College building could have been seen completed by the spring of 1860. There is no documentation to suggest whether Walter and Wilson knew of Tinsley's scheme during the spring and summer of 1858, when they were busy finishing the design work for Bethany College. Nor is there any documentation to suggest whether there was any contact between leaders of the Disciples of Christ college in West Virginia and the Episcopal college in Ohio. It is more likely that there were two similar commissions, progressing simultaneously.

4. Earl W. Oglebay: Earl W. Oglebay (1849-1926) was a student at Bethany during the late 1860s, when the final work on "Old Main" was being carried to completion, and was a member of the 1871 graduating class — the first to use Commencement Hall. In 1877 he became president of the National Bank of West Virginia, in Wheeling, and in the early 1880s, he began to play a major role in various Cleveland companies engaged in the mining and distribution of Lake Superior iron ore. While managing these enterprises, he also took an active interest in promoting scientific agriculture and agricultural education in West Virginia. In 1901 Oglebay acquired Waddington Farm — a 750-acre tract north of Wheeling — and expanded it into a 1200-acre experimental farm. In 1909 he was a delegate to the International Institute of Agriculture convention in Rome. Oglebay purchased the Alexander Campbell Mansion and farm in 1911 and in 1913 gave the farm to Bethany College and the house to the Campbell Memorial and Historical Association. He endowed a new department of agriculture at Bethany in 1911 and provided funds for the construction of "Oglebay Hall" at the north end of "Old Main," so that the building, finally completed in the year of his graduation forty years before, would be complete again. Oglebay's will left Waddington Farm to the City of Wheeling, which has managed it as Oglebay Park since the late 1920s.

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Washington, D.C.  
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## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: "Old Main" is a red brick Gothic building which extends for 420 feet along the crest of the principal hill of the Bethany College campus. The building consists of seven distinct sections, arranged symmetrically, but with picturesque variety, along the single long axis. The red brick clock tower, rising over 140 feet at the center of the building, is the dominant feature and a landmark for miles around.
2. Condition of fabric: The building has been repaired and remodeled at various stages in its history, so that some original architectural features are now lost or altered. An extensive campaign to restore the exterior and adapt the interior for further college use began in 1977, in accordance with recommendations prepared by Grigg, Wood and Browne, Architects, of Charlottesville, Virginia.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building can be contained within a rectangle measuring 416' 2½" by 129' 6¼". The front facades of the seven component units lie roughly within the same plane. While the two end units extend back over 100', the central tower section extends back only 66', and the north and south connecting units, with classrooms in front and corridor behind, extend back only 45'.
2. Foundations: Most of the foundations are limestone, laid with bedding planes horizontal. Blocks of buff sandstone, some laid with bedding planes vertical, in many places form the next course above the limestone.
3. Wall construction: The walls are red brick, laid in common bond.
4. Structural system, framing: All walls, with the exception of a few interior partitions, are load-bearing brick. According to the 1858 specifications, joists were to be 2½" thick, with depths ranging from 12" in the classrooms and corridor to 14" and 16" beneath the library or chapel (i.e. large second-floor room in central tower section). It was also specified that the joists be set on 12" centers.
5. Porches, stoops: The building has six front entrances: one main central entrance on axis with the tower; one at the outside end of each two-story connecting section; one at the center of each of the two end sections; and one passageway between Oglebay Hall and the one-story connecting section adjoining it to the south. The central entrance is sheltered by a broad four-centered arch which opens upon a wide passageway to the main stairs in the tower at the rear. One-story, gable-roof, masonry porches shelter the entrances at the outside ends of the two-story connecting sections and at the center of Oglebay Hall and Commencement Hall (this last porch added c. 1924). Steps leading to these front entrances are sandstone, laid with bedding planes horizontal. The entrance at the north end of the north two-story connecting section has a cast iron sill.

There is one rear entrance at the base of the tower, on line with the front entrance. It, too, is enclosed by a broad four-centered arch. The rear steps are sandstone. There is a secondary entrance into the north end of Oglebay Hall, with stone steps leading to ground level.

An open arcaded corridor runs for 301' along the rear of the building, passing through the center section just in front of the tower. The arcade consists of four-centered arches — eight of them in the north connecting sections and nine of them in the south. These had diamond-pattern wrought iron railings at least as early as the 1890s. The nine basement-level arches in the south connecting sections were filled in with glass brick in 1937.

6. Chimneys: The central tower section has two end chimneys -- one at either end of the ridge line -- carrying four flues each, and originally culminating in a file of four terra cotta chimney pots. The north two-story connecting section had one end chimney, with one flue and one chimney pot, in the wall adjoining the one-story section. This two-story section also had three interior chimneys, each with two flues and two chimney pots. These were symmetrically arranged around the cross gable above the crenelated bay window -- two chimneys on the front roof slope, one on the rear slope on axis with the cross gable. The north one-story connecting section had one interior central chimney, with two flues and two chimney pots. The south connecting sections probably had the same configuration of chimneys, but closer examination of the building fabric and of old photographs is needed to confirm this point.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: All but one of the front entrances described above in connection with the porches have doors -- the exception being the open passageway at the north end of the one-story connecting section against the wall of Oglebay Hall. The rear tower entrance and the Oglebay Hall north entrance also have doors. All of these are double doors, shaped to fit the four-centered or drop arch openings and divided by Gothic moldings into vertical panels. (See east entrance detail A on sheet 24) In addition, there are various doors from the rear corridor or from the passageway in the central section leading to classrooms or to stairhalls. Most of these openings are four-centered arches, containing transoms above and rectangular doors below, divided into vertical panels. Rectangular double doors lead into the stairhalls in the connecting sections, and arched double doors lead into the two rooms on either side of the passageway in the central section. (See door detail U on sheet 29) There is a double sliding door in the central section in the broad 17' four-centered arch between the continuous rear corridor and the stairhall at the base of the tower. (See photograph WV-118-11)
  - b. Windows: Most of the windows in the central and connecting sections are two or three panels wide and have sills, cusped span-drels, and label moldings carved of buff sandstone. The mullions are of molded brick, and these windows are set beneath segmental brick relieving arches. The sash is double-hung. (See window detail F on sheet 26) Bay windows five panels wide are located on the front (east) of both one-story connecting sections and both two-story connecting sections. An oriel window consisting of three double-panel sash units is located over the main front entrance in the central section. It is of wood construction and rests on a corbelled stone base. (See window detail H on sheet 26, and photographs WV-118-3 and 4)

Oglebay Hall has a variety of windows, carved of buff sandstone. The second-floor window over the entrance has four panels of fixed sash, culminating in broad Perpendicular Gothic tracery. On the north and west elevations of Oglebay Hall are seven-panel two-story window walls, divided between floors by a row of spandrels with heraldic motifs. (See window detail K on sheet 27)

The sills, mullions, spandrels and label moldings of the windows of Commencement Hall, as replaced during the 1924 remodeling, are formed of artificial stone (white quartz fragments in a buff sand aggregate). The windows on the north and south sides are three panels wide, with movable sash in the center panel. (See window detail J on sheet 27) The window over the front entrance has five panels of fixed sash, culminating in Decorated Gothic tracery. The three-part Decorated Gothic rear window of Commencement Hall has been bricked up above the first-floor level.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is divided into a series of gabled sections, with ridge lines running north-south, parallel to the long main axis of the building. The ridge lines of the gable roofs of Commencement Hall and Oglebay Hall are, however, perpendicular to this long main axis, as are the ridge lines of the cross gables along the front elevation. The roofs are covered with gray slate, and the original pattern consisted of two rows of slates with chamfered corners alternating with four rows of slates with square corners. Cast iron cresting can still be seen along the ridges of the roofs of the south connecting sections. (See roof cresting detail N on sheet 28)
- b. Cornice, eaves: A sandstone stringcourse three feet below the eaves runs along the front of the one-story connecting sections, and edges the front and rear gable ends of Commencement Hall. Cornices, and capstones for the buttresses and gable ends, are also sandstone. Most of the cross gables facing the front (east) are capped with sandstone finials. The octagonal buttresses that frame the center bay of the central section culminate in sandstone pinnacles.
- c. Dormers, cupola, tower: There are two front and two rear dormers in the attic level of the central section, one on either side of the main cross gable. These dormers are of wood. (See dormer details M on sheet 28)

A slate-clad cupola, consisting of a steep pyramidal roof with four intersecting cross gables, is located near the center of the ridge line in the south two-story connecting section.



At the southeast corner of Commencement Hall there is a stair turret (square in plan at ground level and octagonal in plan above the buttresses).

The main tower, 22' square in plan, rises at the rear of the central section and is centered above the passageway between the main front and rear entrances. Its body of brick rises to an eaves line 96' above basement level (or 85' above first-floor level). An octagonal brick turret, containing a winding stair, is attached to the southwest corner of the tower. This turret rises to an eaves line 124' above basement level (or 113' above first-floor level). The tower cornice consists of a billet molding of corbelled brick, with larger stone corbels carved with a ball-flower pattern. The tower has a steep truncated pyramidal roof, rising 24' above the eaves line. Each of the four roof slopes has a wooden dormer, containing a clock face. (A working clock was installed in 1904 and electrified in 1942.) Iron railings run around the perimeter of the pyramidal roof at its base and at its top. (See tower balcony railing detail on sheet 28) The octagonal turret is surmounted by a 10' openwork cone of iron rods and has a 13' iron weathervane at the top. Originally, terra cotta chimney pots were mounted on the slender brick pedestals at each corner at the base of the tower roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Because of the rise in grade level toward the north, only the central section, the south connecting sections, and Commencement Hall have a full basement. A 6' wide corridor runs for 160' from Commencement Hall into the central section. The basement rooms along the rear of the building are approximately 13' deep and are located beneath the 14' wide open corridor that runs along the rear of the building at the first-floor level. The basement rooms along the front of the building are approximately 19' deep. A stairhall is located at the south end of the two-story south connecting section. The central section is divided by foundation walls and partitions into rooms of various sizes. The basement of Commencement Hall is also partitioned into rooms of various sizes.

A partial basement, irregularly divided, occupies the middle area of Oglebay Hall, at the north end of the building.

- b. First floor: An open arcaded corridor 14' wide runs for 301' along the rear of the building, from Commencement Hall to Oglebay Hall. The central tower section is divided into nine "cells": two square rooms on either side of the square stairhall at the

base of the tower at the rear of the building; two rectangular rooms on either side of the rectangular passageway at the front of the building; and three of the "cells" are thrown together without obstruction to comprise the long corridor itself, as it passes through this central section.

The north and south connecting sections have a stairhall at the outermost end of the two-story connecting unit, running between the front stoops and the long rear corridor. The classrooms along the front of the building in the north and south connecting sections are approximately 26' deep. The larger classrooms are the pair on either side of the stairhall, and they are entered by doors which enter off the stairhall. The smaller classrooms, at the extreme ends of the connecting sections (adjacent to either the central section of Commencement or Oglebay Hall), are entered by doors which open off the long rear corridor.

Commencement Hall on the first-floor level is equipped with auditorium seating. Oglebay Hall has an irregular plan, arranged around a T-shaped hallway. The stem of the T adjoins the long rear corridor and contains the main staircase. The arms of the T lead to the classrooms at the rear of this section and to the vaulted vestibule at the front.

- c. Second floor: The central section contains only the square stairhall inside the tower at the rear and a single 58' by 41' room at the front, with a raised 17" platform, 19' wide and 6' deep, set into the oriel window over the front entrance. In the north and south connecting sections, immediately adjacent to the large room, are rooms which originally, when unpartitioned, measured approximately 25' by 41'. The remainder of the second floor area in the north and south connecting sections has been partitioned into classrooms of various sizes, opening off of one another or off of the north and south stairhalls.

There is no access from these sections at the second-floor level to either Commencement Hall or Oglebay Hall. Commencement Hall has a balcony at the east end, reached by stairways along the front (east) wall. Oglebay Hall has an irregular floor plan, arranged around a T-shaped hallway.

2. Stairways: The main staircase in the tower contains a pair of quarter-landing stairs, which share their second landing (on axis with the front and rear doorways) and rise together to the second-floor level. The newel posts are square, with chamfered corners, and the balusters are turned. The wainscots of the first-floor hall rise with the stairs to the first quarter landing. (See stair detail B on sheet 24 and photographs WV-118-11 and 14)

The south connecting section has a half-landing stair leading from the basement level (rear) via the vestibule level (front) to the first floor, and a straight-run stair above this leading to the second floor. The basement newel post is square, with chamfered corners, and the balusters on the run to the first floor are turned. (See stairway detail R on sheet 29 and the photograph WV-118-15)

The first-floor newel post is a turned truncated cone, and the balusters on the run to the second floor are octagonal in section. (See stairway detail Q on sheet 29)

The north connecting sections have a half-landing stair. Oglebay Hall has a half-landing stair, of iron construction. Commencement Hall has a quarter-landing stair to the right (north) of the entrance and a smaller half-landing stair in the turret to the left (south) of the entrance. The octagonal turret at the southwest corner of the tower contains a winding stair.

3. Flooring: Floors in the basement are now vinyl tile. Floors in the classrooms and stairhalls in the north and south connecting sections and in the passageway and rear corridor in the central section are hardwood. However, the first-floor rooms in the central section and several second-floor rooms in the connecting sections are now covered with vinyl tile. The first-floor corridors at the rear of the north and south connecting sections are covered with quarry tile, as is the first-floor hallway in Oglebay Hall. The remainder of the floors in Oglebay Hall are vinyl tile. Commencement Hall has a concrete floor and a wood-floored balcony.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most of the walls and ceilings were originally lath and plaster, but many rooms have subsequently been remodeled with plywood walls and acoustical tile ceilings. Ceilings for the entire length of the rear corridor are unfinished, showing the exposed joists.

The large second-floor room in the central section has the original paneled ceiling, consisting of sections 9' wide and 10' deep arranged six across and four deep. The major beams framing the panels are about 12" deep in section, and the recessed panel surfaces have 3" to 5" boards running east-west. The beams running east-west terminate, on both the front and rear walls, in brackets. (See east wall elevation and beam elevation V on sheet 30, and photographs WV-118-16 and 17)

The adjoining second-floor in the south connecting section is now partitioned, but originally had eight wooden brackets, four along the east wall and four along the west wall. (See bracket details W on sheet 30)

The vestibule ceiling in Oglebay Hall has three bays of plaster vaulting. The vestibule walls are white brick, and the bays are divided by sandstone colonnettes with plaster bases and capitals.

The open trussed roof of Commencement Hall, reconstructed in 1924, consists of eight wooden trusses, laminated and bolted together. (See photograph WV-118-22)

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The original architraves throughout the interior have composite profiles of concave and convex moldings. (See molding profiles on sheet 29) Many of the interior doors have been replaced, but those which are original are set into rectangular or segmental arch openings and consist of four panels, with chamfered rails and stiles. (See door details S and T on sheet 29)

b. Windows: Most of the windows in the central and connecting sections have double-hung sash, and the original glazing was probably 4 over 4. Stained glass is used in the fixed upper sash of the oriel window of the large second-floor room in the central section, and in the fixed upper sash of the windows at the four corners of this same room. The emblems of the four Evangelists provide the motifs for these four windows: Matthew (north front window), Mark (south front window), Luke (south rear window), and John (north rear window). (See window detail G on sheet 26 and interior elevation on sheet 30, and photograph WV-118-18) There is also stained glass in the upper sash of the rear windows in the north two-story connecting section. The large second-floor window on the front of Oglebay Hall is glazed with diamond-shaped panes of clear glass. (See window detail E on sheet 26 and photographs WV-118-19 and 20) The windows of Commencement Hall are glazed with rectangular panes of clear glass.

6. Decorative features and trim: According to the 1858 specifications, doors, architraves, window sills, and baseboards were to have painted graining in imitation of oak. Some of this graining can still be seen; for instance, in the stairway in the tower of the central section.

7. Hardware: A brass doorknob and lock plate, designed with various Gothic motifs, is located on the front door of Oglebay Hall. (See door hardware detail L on sheet 27)

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: All of the original fireplaces in the classrooms have been covered over.
- b. Lighting: Electric.
- c. Plumbing: Standard.

B. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building is located at the crest of the principal hill on the Bethany Campus, about 100 feet above the main street of the town of Bethany. "Old Main" faces east-southeast, but in common usage, it is considered to face east. The grade slopes downward about 16' between the north and south ends of the building, so that an additional basement story becomes possible south of the central tower section.

A driveway, situated on axis with the tower of "Old Main," runs half-way up the hill and terminates in a gateway with a semicircular double stairway behind (built 1910). A sidewalk continues up the slope to the main entrance of the building. Another sidewalk runs parallel to the front of the building, climbing gradually from Commencement Hall on the south to Oglebay Hall on the north.

Large sugar maple trees are planted near the top of the hill, 50 to 100 feet in front of the building. To the rear is a nearly level lawn, where commencement exercises are held.

- 2. Related buildings: About 400 feet to the northeast of "Old Main" is the only structure on the hill which predates the 1858 college building. This is "Pendleton Heights," constructed by William K. Pendleton in 1841, and now used as the President's House.

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Washington, D.C.  
June 1, 1981

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

1. Original architectural drawings: None have been found.
2. Old views:
  - a. Lithographs (in Bethany College Archives, Bethany College Library)
    - (1) View of "Old Main" from northeast (showing crenelated tower), Middleton, Strobridge & Co., c. 1858-61 (reproduced in Swofford, see page 22, below)
    - (2) View of "Old Main" from southeast, in rectangular format (showing tower with flared hip roof), Strobridge & Co., c. 1867-88 (reproduced in Swofford)
    - (3) View of "Old Main" from southeast, in oval format, (showing tower with flared hip roof), Strobridge & Co., c. 1867-88.
  - b. Photographs (in Bethany College Archives, Bethany College Library)
    - (1) Miscellaneous loose photographs (c.1870-1980)
    - (2) Photographs in Bethany College yearbooks.
3. Bibliography:
  - a. Primary and unpublished sources (in Bethany College Archives, Bethany College Library):
    - (1) Board of Trustees Minutes
    - (2) [Chewning, Paul B.], "History of Old Main Building," (mimeographed report, January 31, 1975). Contains transcriptions of accounts from the Millennial Harbinger, newspapers, memoirs; accounts of College departments, literary societies, finances, original and subsequent room uses; bids and invoices for work on Commencement Hall (1867-71).
  - b. Secondary and published sources:
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(4) Architectural context and possible sources

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June 1, 1981

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was jointly sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey and Bethany College. Under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the field team included Susan Dynes, Project Supervisor, and Student Architects Timothy Allanbrook (Rhode Island School of Design), Ronald Geraci (University of Maryland), A. Dean Knott (University of Florida), and Jack R. Taipala (University of Michigan). The Architectural Historian was J. A. Chewning (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer. Final preparation of the documentation was carried out in the HABS Washington Office by David Marsh, HABS Architect, Susan Shufelt, NPS Architect, Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor, and Denys Peter Myers, HABS Architectural Historian.

**ADDENDUM TO:**

**BETHANY COLLEGE, "OLD MAIN" BUILDING**

Route 67, 5 miles east of junction with Route 88

Bethany

Brooke County

West Virginia

**HABS No. WV-118**

HABS

WVA

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